

Message Text

SECRET

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51

ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 PM-03 DODE-00 NSC-10

NSCE-00 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 /058 W

----- 054127

R 231348Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5008

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

S E C R E T LONDON 12273

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, AF

SUBJECT: BRITISH FEARS ON AFGHAN STABILITY

1. FCO DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY WILFORD AND SOUTH ASIAN ASST. DEPT. HEAD SLATER HAVE JOINTLY AND SEPARATELY CONFIRMED TO US THAT BRITISH STILL SUBSCRIBE TO VIEW EXPRESSED BY THEM IN US-UK TALKS SEPTEMBER 25 THAT OVERTHROW OF DAOUD BY YOUNGER OFFICERS IS MORE LIKELY THAN NOT, AND FAIRLY IMMINENT. WILFORD TOLD US ON OCTOBER 15 THAT BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN KABUL HAD EXPRESSLY GIVEN THAT ESTIMATE WHEN WILFORD VISITED HIM RECENTLY.

2. BRITISH COULD NOT PRODUCE DETAILED EVIDENCE FOR THEIR ASSUMPTION AND ADMITTED THEY ARE HAVING TROUBLE

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IDENTIFYING WHO YOUNGER OFFICERS ARE, MUCH LESS LEARN-

ING MUCH ABOUT THEM. THIS HAS ITS ALARMING FACET.
HOWEVER, FCO IS AT A LOSS ON WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

3. COMMENT: FCO VIEWS ON SOUTH ASIA CANNOT BE DIS-
MISSED OUT OF HAND. WE WOULD BE MORE IMPRESSED BY
BRITISH CONCERNS, HOWEVER, IF WE THOUGHT THEIR IN-
TELLIGENCE ON AFGHANISTAN WERE BETTER THAN, OR EVEN
AS GOOD AS, OURS. IT IS A FACT THAT AS LATE AS
OCTOBER 19 FCO SOUTH ASIAN DEPT. (SLATER) HAD STILL
NOT LEARNED OF ARRIVAL OF SOVIET MILITARY MISSION IN
KABUL ON OCTOBER 15 (KABUL 7324, ETC.) AND WAS OPERAT-
ING ON EARLIER REPORT RELATING ONLY TO AN ECONOMIC
MISSION. SLATER TOLD US REPORTING FROM KABUL TENDED
TO BE MOSTLY RUMOR AND HEARSAY.

ANNENBERG

SECRET

NNN

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